

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
6013 Lakeside Boulevard
Indianapolis, In
46278

December 10, 2005

INDIANA BULLETIN NO. IN440-5-1

SUBJECT: PGM- Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) Fiscal Year 2005.

Purpose: To establish the first round sign up period for FY 05 GRP.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2005

Action Required By: January 7, 2005

This bulletin is to announce the first round sign up cutoff for the Grassland Reserve Program, and to provide guidance for accepting and processing applications.

GRP is a continuous sign up program and applications can be taken throughout the year. Service Centers should continue to accept all new GRP applications (AD-1153) through COB January 7, 2005 for the first round sign up.

All application ranking should be completed by District Conservationists using the attached FY 05 GRP electronic ranking worksheet.

All unfunded FY04 applications were deferred to FY05 and are on the attached FY04 GRP backlog list. Be sure to look at both the rental backlog and the easement backlog tabs. The backlog list only includes applications that were received by the FY04 cutoff date of July 19, 2004 and includes all FY03 backlog applications that were deferred to FY04. The applicants on the backlog list do not need to reapply if they wish to continue. District Conservationists should ***contact all applicants on the backlog list*** to determine if they are still interested in the GRP program. All applicants still interested in the GRP program will need to be re-ranked using the FY 05 electronic ranking worksheet.

As a reminder, both NRCS and FSA can take the AD-1153 application and should work together to do so. When FSA takes the application, it needs to be logged into System 36 and the signed 1153 needs to be provided to NRCS within two working days so NRCS can work on planning with the producer. When NRCS takes the application, the signed 1153 needs to be provided to FSA within two working days so it can be logged into System 36 in a timely manner. Refer to FSA Notice GRP-3 for instructions on recording the application, contract, and technical practice codes.

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The timeline for GRP implementation is as follows:

- **January 7, 2005** New applicants that signed up after July 9, 2004 and those that sign up by the close of business Friday, January 7, 2005 will be considered in the first round of funding.
- **February 4, 2005** All eligible applications need to be ranked using the FY 05 electronic ranking sheet by the close of business. A field visit is recommended to complete ranking.
- **February 4, 2005** All completed ranking sheets and electronic conservation plan maps of the offered acres and planned practices need to be e-mailed to Jim Dunaway by the close of business.
- **March 4, 2005** Grazing Specialists will complete site reviews and make necessary ranking adjustments by close of business.
- **March 11, 2005** GRP applications that have been selected for funding will be announced through a joint memo to FSA and NRCS, and funds will be allocated to local offices.
- **March 23, 2005** Joint FSA /NRCS teleconference to cover details of contracts (only offices with funded contracts).
- **March 25, 2005** Plans and contracts (CCC-920) to FSA and obligations are recorded by FSA.

The following are FY05 GRP program provisions of special interest:

- For an application to be eligible, proof of ownership or control of the land for the contract period must be provided.
- GRP applications will NOT be entered in ProTracts this year.
- Applicants on the FY04 backlog list that wish to continue with the program will automatically be considered in the first round of funding.
- Incidental land is limited to 10% on rental agreements, and 20% on easements.
- Cropland is eligible for GRP **only** if the historic native vegetation was grassland/ herbaceous.
- Rental applications will be in one pool and easement applications in another, so that offers are competing only within that pool.
- The Grassland Specialists will complete a site review prior to funding decisions on all sites that rank high enough to be considered for funding.
- Access from a public road must be granted for all easements and identified at the time of application.
- The intent of GRP has been restated to prioritize enrollment of working, non-urban agricultural lands, to avoid competition with lands that are more suited to enrollment in the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program.
- Any ranking sheets saved and e-mailed that do not follow the instructions in item #13 of the Instructions and Guidelines for GRP Ranking Form (within the ranking worksheet) will be returned for correction.

Additional information on GRP and necessary forms can be found on the Indiana NRCS web site by clicking on the Programs tab.

If you have any questions concerning the Grassland Reserve Program, the ranking sheet, or the instructions please contact Dwayne Howard at ext. 386, or Jim Dunaway at ext. 334.

/s/

JANE E. HARDISTY
State Conservationist

cc: Dwayne Howard, ASTC-Programs

Attachments